

MUS LINEOLATUS, Gould



MUS LINEOLATUS, *Gould.*

Plain Rat.

Mus lineolatus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xiii. p. 77.

THIS species of *Mus* was discovered by Mr. Gilbert on the Darling Downs, where it appears to be abundant. In size it is just intermediate between a Rat and a Mouse, taking our own well-known animals for comparison. Two fine examples are now in my own collection, but will hereafter be added to the stores of the National Museum, where they will be at all times accessible to the mammalogist who may wish to investigate this intricate group of animals;—I say intricate, because so great a sameness of colouring prevails among the species, that it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish one from another; indeed it can scarcely be effected without reference to the specimens themselves; for, although the utmost care is always taken to secure the accuracy of my illustrations, the minute characters which distinguish them cannot be rendered sufficiently apparent in a drawing.

The dark colouring of the upper surface of the well-clothed tail, contrasted with the light hue of its under portion, are the points which distinguish this species.

Mr. Gilbert states that it is called *Yar-lie* by the natives of the Darling Downs; that it is common in all the open parts of the grassy plains, and that he believes it is confined to the interior of the country.

The fur of this animal is long and very soft; on the back the hairs are of a deep slate-grey, but with the exposed portion of a dirty yellowish hue, the points however being black; long interspersed black pointed hairs are abundant on the back, and give a deep general tint to that part; on the sides of the body the prevailing tint is greyish-yellow, and the under parts are grey-white, faintly suffused with yellowish; the hairs on these parts are however of a deepish grey, excepting at the points; the hairs of the moustaches are rather small and black; the eye is encircled with black; the ears are of moderate size and well covered with minute hairs; those on the outer side are black, excepting on the hinder part, where they assume a greyish-white tint, like those on the inner side of the ear. The feet are rather small and white; the fore-feet are however greyish at the wrist, and the tarsi are indistinctly suffused with yellowish. The tail is about equal in length to the head and body taken together, well clothed with smallish hairs, which do not however perfectly hide the scales; those on the upper surface are chiefly brownish-black, but slightly pencilled with whitish in parts; on the sides and under part they are white.

The Plate represents the animal of the natural size.